

FACT SHEET



Iowa City Former Manufactured Gas Plant Iowa City, Iowa

November 1998

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is releasing the results of sampling conducted as part of an expanded site investigation at the Iowa City Former Manufactured Gas Plant (FMGP) Superfund site. The site is located at 505 Burlington Street, in Iowa City, Iowa.

BACKGROUND

From 1910 to 1939, gas was manufactured at a plant located on the southeast corner of Burlington and Van Buren Streets. Iowa City Light and Power Company operated the plant from 1912-1942. In the 1940s, Iowa City Light and Power Company became the Iowa-Illinois Gas and Electric Company (now known as MidAmerican Energy Company), which maintained service facilities on the property until about 1971. In 1983, an apartment complex was built on the site.

When the gas was produced, by-products such as coal tar were also produced. Some compounds found in coal tar are hazardous substances that can cause health and environmental problems if handled improperly. EPA has conducted sampling on several occasions over the past few years at the site to determine the extent and source of contamination.

SAMPLING RESULTS

EPA conducted additional sampling at the Iowa City FMGP in September 1997 as part of an Expanded Site Investigation (ESI). The purpose of the ESI was to get enough information about the contamination at the site to determine if a full-scale site investigation was necessary. Groundwater, soil, air, and sediment and water from Ralston Creek were sampled. Results of the sampling include:

! Coal tar contaminants related to former manufactured gas plant operations, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), were found in soil and groundwater samples taken on and off site.

! Metals, including lead, cyanide and arsenic were found in the soil on and off site.

! Sediment samples taken from Ralston Creek, next to the site, contained coal tar related contaminants and metals, however, sediment samples taken from the creek downstream of the site showed minimal impact from the site.

! Trace amounts of VOCs were found in surface water samples, but since they were found both adjacent to and upstream of the site, they are likely to be present due to urban runoff rather than due to the site.

! Air samples taken in the apartments did show elevated levels of some compounds, a common occurrence in indoor air, but they do not appear to be related to the FMGP.

The sample results from the ESI indicate that further investigation and a risk assessment are necessary for this site.

NEXT STEPS

Under the Superfund law, Iowa-Illinois Manor, the owner of the site, and the MidAmerican Energy Company are considered potentially liable for the contamination at the site. Both parties have the opportunity to discuss with EPA their involvement in future work to characterize the nature and extent of contamination at the site and the risk that the site may pose to human health and the environment.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) has also been completed for the Iowa City FMGP site. In preparing the CIP, EPA interviewed a cross-section of the local community to better understand how much is currently known about EPA's activities at the site and what concerns the community has about the site. The plan also describes what actions EPA will take to keep community members informed of site activities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The CIP and the report with the sampling data, called an Expanded Site Investigation, are available at the following location during normal business hours:

Iowa City Public Library
123 S. Linn
Iowa City, Iowa

If you have questions or would like additional information about this site, please contact:

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